6

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15°
north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the
federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq.
miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000
sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size
of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean
on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment
borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland
of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has
enabled the plateau people to retain their independence
against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a
Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is
subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja
Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for
the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 192

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [671] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Nagast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 631

3. Public Administration and Territorial Organization

The social structure supported by the pillars of traditional land tenure and feudal army organization, is maintained by a third pillar, public administration and the old territorial organization. However, all three are now in process of gradual, and uneven, transition, partly resembling analogous developments in Europe at the end of the feudal Middle Ages.

A. Rural Administration

622 Much as the hierarchical pyramid of land tenure and the old army of the Amhara rested on the broad back of the "gabbar", so does rural organization still rest ultimately on the broad base of the rural official known as "cḥeqa shum" (lit. appointee over the soil). He might be regarded as village headman, though in view of the residential pattern of scattered hamlets ("ṭis"), his area includes a collection of them, collectively known as "mänd̈är" (village). This may coincide, in the old-Amhara provinces, with the church parishes known as "ānd debber agär".

Although appointed by the governor of the province, and supervised by the intermediate district chief ("worāda gäj", or "worāda shum", or "mislanē", i.e. governor's deputy, or lieutenant), the cheqa shum is regarded as the agent of the highest administrative power, formerly the "ras" of the province; or the king ("negus"); now the emperor. In thetraditional pattern

622 guests; small gifts from Muslim traders at the big market in his domain; etc.

It is still customary that a son of the cheqa shum be appointed to his father's post after him, unless there is some specific reason for deciding otherwise. Thus the cheqa shum has been a major stabilizing factor in Amhara history, surviving warlords, feudal families, rebel governors, provincial dynasties. When Menelik II conquered Galla lands, he found it useful to appoint similar village headmen, "qoro", from among the Galla. The Italians, too, during their brief conquest, maintained the office of the cheqa shum, to avoid chaotic conditions, only occasional and tangential reference is made to the cheqa shum, which in practice confirms him in his customary role.

Since the cheqa shum usually owns land in his domain, sometimes a woman, sole survivor of the family, is appointed cheqa shum, especially if she is a generous donor to the local church and thus has a powerful ally. In this case she will hold her office in "honorary" capacity, appointing a man to represent her when making the tours and in dealings with menfolk. But she will usually not appoint her own husband, because their private property is regarded as potentially separate (e.g. in case of ultimate divorce).

● 631 As indicated before, several cheqa shum, of a half-district (yämeketl wärädä) or a district (wärädä) are supervised by their superior, the lieutenant of the governor, often called "mislanē". These district super-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the ṭheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

631 635 Provincial administration can be summarized as follows:

Table 6: The New, Centralized, Provincial Administration.

Location:	Administrator:	Staff:	
Provincial Capital-urban-center of province.	"ṭäqlay gäj" (Governor-general) appoints lower office-holders; often absent, at court of Emperor.	Director-General, appointed by cent. govt.; always in residence.	Secretary-general "wana ṭsähafi" appointed by central govt.; always in residence. Does most of routine adminis.
Administers mostly from provincial capital	"awraja gäj" governor of sub-province (e.g. 6 in Begemdir province) Appointed by Governor-general.	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"wordda gäj", district chief. (24 in Begemdir province) sometimes old "mislanë". Appointed by Governor-general	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"yämeketl wordda gäj" chief of about 1/10 of the district. (255 in Begemdir province). Position must be confirmed by Governor-general, through "däj tenat"	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from own village.	"cheqa shum" headman of "mändär" or "and debber agär". Confirmed by Governor-general.	Can improvise unpaid staff.	

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

631 635 178 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Governor-general of the province is the only administrator permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 565 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

631 565 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the "awraja gäj" and "worāda" chiefs are from medium and lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate" 646 565 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility, the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa areas.

643 631 178 565 Many special privileges of regional nobility have been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum", hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by him; also the "Behēr Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated, of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet, barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Oaina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown many of the others, and they told us that every three years they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicazi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

because he receives, and does justice: he told me that it was true that they paid the said horses. I asked why the monastery wanted so many horses, since they did not ride on them. He told me that they were obliged to pay horses, but that they did not give him horses, but paid fifty cows for each horse, and that this due of horses was so because these were villages of the King which paid him this due, and as he had endowed the monastery with these villages, between the monastery and the villagers this due of horses had been transmuted into cows. And over and above these dues of cows they also pay dues on fruits. Besides, at fifteen days' journey from the monastery, in the kingdom of Tigre mahom, there is a very large town belonging to the monastery named Aadete, which may be a large dukedom. This pays every year sixty horses, and an infinite number of dues and customs. In this district there are always more than a thousand friars of the monastery, because there are many churches in it, and the monastery is much favoured there. Of these friars some are very good, honourable, and devout, and others are not such. Besides these dues of horses paid to this monastery and to others, there are many villages belonging to the King which pay dues of the said horses, because this is always his due, and there are villages neighbouring to Egypt in which are large and good horses, and others near Arabia in which they are very good, but not so much so as those of Egypt.

CAP. XVI.—*How the friars impeded our departure, and of what happened to us on the road.*

Returning therefore to our journey; whilst we were still at the monastery of St. Michael there arrived the man sent by the Barnagais to take us away, and with him two of our Portuguese, on the fourth day of the month of June; and he

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 this town of Barua, a man was lying asleep at night at the door of his enclosure, and his little son was with him, keeping his cows, and a lion came and killed this man without anyone perceiving it, and he ate his nose and opened his heart, without touching the child. The people of the country were greatly afraid, and said that he would remain with a taste for man's flesh,[1] and that no one would escape from him. The Lord was pleased that he never did any more harm. We used to go hunting at that time near this place, and we never found any lion, but we found ounces and tigers; we did them no harm, neither did they do us any.

CAP. XXIV.—*Of the lordship of the Barnagais, and of the lords and captains who are at his orders and commands, and of the dues which they pay.*

643 The lordship of the Barnagais is in this manner: its title
63 is that of King, because nagais means King, and bar means sea, so Barnagais means King of the Sea. When they give him the rulership they give it him with a crown of gold on his head, but it does not last longer than what the Prester John pleases. For in our time, which was a stay of six years, there were here four Barnagais, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was Barnagais; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten or twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John. When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman, who was named Arraz anubiata. This man held it two years, and they took from him this lordship and made him the greatest lord of the court, which is Betudete,[2] and the lordship of Barnagais was given to

[1] *Cevado*, literally, allured.

[2] The favourite or preferred, *Bitwaddad*, because he was liked.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Barnagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

643 631 643 701 631 [534] [292] [411]

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chanfas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xnums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
65 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
291 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

[643] 635 Harar is now ruled over by the Emperor's second son. While it is clearly difficult to deduce constitutional rules from conflicts at this level, turning our glance to a lower one we may note that in addition to the few examples of continuity, many others could be given of frequent changes of governorship, even in the north, by both Menelik[1] and Haile Selassié. These would illustrate their ability to act upon these rights in this way, at those times in their reigns when they were strong enough to do so.

It is interesting to consider more closely the exact position as to the distribution of governorships on the eve of the Italian invasion. For convenience the south, which must be discussed in somewhat more detail later, has for this purpose been included with the north. According to an authoritative Italian writer, the number of provinces was thirty-two; of these, six might be regarded as being headed by governors of local hereditary status. They were Wag, Tigré (divided between two local notables), Wallaga, the small region of Beni-Shangul under local Muslim governors, and Salale under Ras Kassa. Eastern and southern Shoa was a royal dominion; Wallo, Harar, and Ogaden were also personal fiefs of the Emperor governed by his sons. The remaining twenty-one provinces were all under the Emperor's men, governors appointed by him from among his closest relatives and supporters, including a few of the 'new' younger and more progressive officials.[2] This analysis would suggest that, by the end of the first part of his reign, Haile Selassié, as far as appointments of governors were concerned, had succeeded in controlling very directly some two-thirds of the country.

● 631 635 Mr. de Halpert, however, in information supplied to the writer, is critical of these categories as being too exact. He points out that in the Ethiopia of 1935 it was almost impossible to say which division was a province and which a district. Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, as ancient kingdoms, were really subdivided into a number of administrative districts. He would also dispute the exact significance of some of the appointments. Without discussing these points in further detail, it may at least be assumed that the provinces and districts could be roughly divided into those that were more and those that were less closely under imperial control and that the former were the more numerous and were upon the increase.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

635 The governor then, according to theory, was appointed and dismissed

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 487.

[2] Zoli, 'L'Impero Italiano dell'Africa Orientale', *Bollettino della R. Societa Geografica Italiana*, series VII, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 473–84.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṣeyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[39]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gubbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
• 63 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
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[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[80]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[81] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used
[661] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly
[631] obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well.
[594] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé*, 565 554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa makuās* (the king's double in 644 time of battle). The *liqa makuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri*, as *liqa makuās;* for the *azmāri*, too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 565 554 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose whenever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the [171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *kabaka* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the monarchy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands, [423] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the [631] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either be- [554] cause they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants [423] of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rĭsta-gult*, [631] was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, [554] it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a [428] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a nobleman he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward [554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[87] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuännent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bälabbät*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziabhër* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bälabbät*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhïqä shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bälabbät* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkaññä* and *meslanë*, were normally given by regional governors to *bälabbät* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tĕwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tĕwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[84]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tĕwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more
• 631 concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political
565 transformation.
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643 Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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175 178 631 642 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureaucratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central government has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 525 631 642 646 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of building up their positions, members of the most important noble families have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 631 693 578 [465] Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict governor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 565 554 [571] Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta, orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security departments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen. Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, confiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers, their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa. Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the Crown.

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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

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In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but integrative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pursued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

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Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relationship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer numbers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[38]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shiftä*, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This pertained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppressive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the continuous process of *shum-shir;* the people under his jurisdiction might secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.